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shows the value of Turgot's analysis, and the loss suffered by later writers from a failure to follow in the line that he marked out, and points out the great advance made by Professor Jevons. The growth of the subjective theory in Germany he traces through a series of writers including Rau, Schäffle, Roscher, Hildebrand and Knies, and ending with Menger, von Wieser, von Böhm, Sax and Neumann. He then describes at length the development of the mechanical theories, and ends with a special study of the subjective theory itself in its latest and best form. Aside from its independent value the book constitutes an especially good introduction to the writings of recent economists of the Austrian school.

J. B. CLARK.

Finanzwissenschaft. Von ADOLF WAGNER. Dritter Theil: *Specielle Steuerlehre.* — Uebersicht der Steuergeschichte wichtigerer Staaten und Zeitalter bis Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts. — Die Besteuerung des 19. Jahrhunderts. Einleitung: Britische und französische Besteuerung. Leipzig, Winter'sche Verlagshandlung, 1889. — 8vo, xxxi, 916 pp.

System der Finanzwissenschaft. Ein Lesebuch für Studierende. Von GUSTAV COHN, ord. Prof. der Staatswissenschaften an der Universität Göttingen. Stuttgart, Ferdinand Enke, 1889. — 8vo, x, 804 pp.

The almost simultaneous appearance of these two works is an indication of the active interest taken by German students in the science of finance. An adequate presentation and comparison of the views contained in these latest additions to fiscal literature would require a separate article of many pages. It will be possible in this notice only to touch lightly on some of the more fundamental points.

The first volumes of Professor Wagner's *Finanzwissenschaft* are familiar to all students. Wagner is an acute original thinker, who started out almost two decades ago with the idea of publishing a new edition of Rau's finance, but who soon found his differences to be so great as to call for a new creation, rather than a new edition. The first two volumes of the work appeared years ago — the second in 1880. The third volume which has just been completed deals not with general theory, but with special questions in the history and practice of taxation. Unfortunately Wagner's plan was so comprehensive, his method so confusing and involving so much repetition, as always to make the ultimate completion of the work very doubtful. In fact, as the work progressed, Wagner entered into continually greater details which would have been in place only in a cyclopædia. The consequence is that it has taken him ten years to write volume three, and that he has been able to discuss the present condition of French and English taxation only.

Wagner himself has become tired of this minute method of proceeding and tells us now that he has practically abandoned the intention of completing the work. This is all the more to be regretted because the systems of France and England have already been made familiar to us by other good publications, while the condition of the other countries is far from being equally well known. Wagner shrinks from the labor necessary to write such a fourth volume; but he has himself to blame for being compelled to leave his work a torso. This new volume requires no especial commentary beyond the statement that in all his minute details of the history and practice of taxation, as well as in his general summaries of the French and English systems, he remains true to the ideas advanced in his former volumes. He has continually in mind the demands of what he calls the socio-political principles, the principles whereby the government is looked up to as the regulator of the distribution of wealth and taxation is regarded as a mere engine to redress the existing inequalities of fortune. Much as we may dissent from the fundamental points of Wagner's general financial position, it must be recognized by all that he has developed his doctrines with consummate keenness and phenomenal learning, and that his science of finance, even though a torso, still stands at the head of financial literature for the suggestiveness of its views and the wealth of its contents.

Wagner's pre-eminence, however, is likely to be seriously threatened by the appearance of Professor Cohn's *Finanzwissenschaft*. Cohn's book is constructed on an entirely different method. It forms the second volume of the general *System of Political Economy*, the opening volume of which was noticed in the POLITICAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY, volume i, page 143, and which created a considerable stir throughout the scientific world. After a general introduction on the nature and history of the science of finance the first book treats of the essence of government economy or of the public household. It deals with public functions, public expenditures, the history and development of public revenue, and the budget. The second book discusses the principles, history and actual systems of taxation. The third book is devoted to a presentation of German taxation. Finally a fourth book treats of public credit.

The chief interest of the work lies in the first book and in the first chapter of the second book. The remainder of the volume is always interesting, as are all of Cohn's writings, but it contains nothing that can be called a signal contribution to financial science. He is indeed, through his intimate acquaintance with Swiss financial methods, often enabled to illustrate certain principles more successfully than any of his predecessors, but in the main he follows the rather conservative lines of accepted views. The book on German taxation gives an excellent

picture of the present situation, but does not need any discussion in this place. Finally the chapters on public credit contain an admirable historical survey, but in matters of principle do not afford us anything which cannot be found at least equally well said in Professor Adams' recent work.

It is otherwise with the discussion of the general principles of finance. Cohn's treatment of the various kinds of public contributions (*Die Arten des öffentlichen Entgeltes*) marks a distinct advance. His theoretical separation of fees, assessments, taxes, *etc.* is based upon an analysis of comparative private and public benefits, and he thus attains a satisfactory solution of a problem that has always caused the German scientists much trouble. His description of the historical development of public economy is clearer than that of Roscher, and traces the chief lines of development with a master-hand. His short discussion of the principles of local finance is a veritable relief when compared to the laborious and confused chapters to be found in other treatises.

Most striking is the treatment of the equities of taxation. Cohn shows that just as the accepted ideas of justice are a product of historical evolution, so the conception of just taxation has assumed a different form in every stage of human progress. He gives an interesting historical sketch of the different ideas that swayed the public mind at various epochs, and then devotes himself in particular to a consideration of proportional *versus* progressive taxation. The result of the long discussion is the adoption of the principle of progression, not for Wagner's socio-political reasons, but simply because under modern conditions proportional taxation no longer corresponds to taxable capacity. Cohn seeks to define and limit the principles of progression, and in connection with this gives a stimulating history of the doctrine of the "minimum of existence."

This is not the place to attempt a criticism in detail. That must be reserved for another time and place. Weak points are not lacking, as *e.g.* in the discussion of the incidence and diffusion of taxation and in the treatment of the property tax. It will have served our purpose to call attention to the subjects in which Cohn's book marks a distinct advance on its predecessors. Wagner, Roscher and Cohn supplement one another. Wagner is more radical and audacious in his suggestions and illustrates his theories by a wealth of statistical material; Roscher is weak in theory but strong in history; Cohn seeks to keep the golden mean. But in two respects Cohn's finance is superior to all others—in clearness of style and in philosophic breadth of view. We welcome this new accession to economic literature as one of the most important works of the decade.

EDWIN R. A. SELIGMAN.